ISSUE #3

PERSPECTIVES

A PUBLICATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY ADVISORS

BURNING SANDS

| Gregory S. Parks, Ph.D

NETFLIX AND LEARN

afa

LETTER FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

This issue of Perspectives offers several interesting articles coving current hot topics. A specific article that made me reflect focused on what success looks like. Success is something we all strive to achieve, right? Most people don't aim to be mediocre. Similarly, the AFA Board of Directors wants to achieve success. Since outcomes are often tied to success, what are we trying to accomplish? How do we measure our actions to see if we attain goal completion and then, how do we communicate to others that we have been successful?

As almost 10 months of my presidency has passed, I reflect on several successes for the Board of Directors. Most notably, we secured an excellent new Executive Director for both the Association and the Foundation. We also spent a great deal of time moving from our relationship with our former association management company, Synergos, to a new model that will still allow us to share staff efficiencies with AFLV. We are in a healthy financial position, and our membership numbers are over 1,015 (as of September 13, 2017). This is the piece of the strategic framework we call *efficient operations and resource management.*

Research is another area of our strategic plan. As a doctoral candidate, I plan to contribute to the field with research about our profession and there are many opportunities to cultivate further discourse about our field and membership experience. The research committee created a list of suggestions for future research. Dr. Josh Schutts presented this idea at the 2016 Business Meeting and also in an AdvanceU session last fall. He would be happy to share them with those interested, and we also plan to publicize them on our website. Additionally the AFA Foundation has grant funding opportunities for research.

Communications is the third category of our strategic framework. We currently have three prime methods of published communication: You are reading one right now, so pat yourself on the back! The others are Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors and Essentials. We continue to strategize ways to make these publications flexible and timely while also meeting the needs of our constituents. We are also trying new ways to engage and present current happenings in our field. We know that advocacy for our profession remains of utmost importance, and we plan to continue to communicate with our members about that topic. Stay tuned!

The final, and most comprehensive, of the four strategic framework categories is *educational programming and resources.* We hear the need for mid-level programming, so we ran a pilot mentoring program. We have a workgroup addressing our Core Competencies for Excellence in the Profession. We were able to offer an AdvanceU on the relevant topic of racism post Charlottesville. We continue to create additional ways to meet your professional development needs – and are open to your input about how we can best accomplish this goal.

I do know we can improve on communicating our goal completion related to our strategic framework. That will be a priority for us moving forward. I thank all those who have served with me in 2017, and I am humbled and excited to serve again in 2018 as the presidency is now a two-year term. I look forward to contributing more metrics in our strategic framework to best serve you, our members.

Kara S. Miller, President

LETTER FROM THE **EDITORS**

In the grand and extensive history of fraternity and sorority, arguably no moment greater cemented the image of the modern fraternity in the minds of the public than the release, and subsequent cult following, of the 1978 film Animal House. Thus, a film that was released years before the birth of our youngest professionals has shaped the public perception of what fraternity and sorority "really" is.

Since Animal House there have been countless movies and television shows which have normalized and reinforced negative stereotypes and behavior. They are consumed by the public as funny and all in good fun, while at the same time FSL professionals are called to address, fix, or control behavior of real life fraternity and sorority members.

So, what do we do with this dichotomy? We can stand on our soapboxes and decry the screenwriters and filmmakers, we can boycott movie releases, host campus screenings and discussion, etc. with varied results. However, we can also (somewhat) embrace these as opportunities for education.

Though it is sometimes an unpopular position, I love fraternity and sorority movies – pretty much all of them. I will happily discus with you the educational powers of the party scene in Neighbors, or why Carrie Fisher's cameo in Sorority Row speaks deeply to burnout in chapter advisors and house parents – I do not discriminate, I find risk prevention opportunities everywhere.

Fortunately for you the reader the editorial board, Noah, and I will not subject you to that. Instead, in this edition some talented and passionate people hopped on the Netflix and write bandwagon and have provided introspective and thoughtful reviews of current films, television shows, and the potential resources contained in them. It is our collective hope you will see these featured resources for their potential use in purpose driven conversations about situations, challenges, and issues facing our members and use them in your conversations with students.

Emilee Danielson-Burke & Noah Borton
Co-Editors

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AS SEEN ON

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Noah Borton shared Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors' photo.

July 25 ·

Excited for Issue two to be hitting mailboxes soon! Great work to the team in putting out another interesting issue!

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Submissions should be directed to the Editor, advertising queries to the staff.

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THE SEARCH FOR SUCCESS

Developing Interdependence Between Subjective Career Goals & Objective Industry Needs

BROOKE GOODMAN

Every August, fraternity and sorority advisors usher in a new academic year, prepared and eager to positively impact lives through advancing the fraternity/sorority experience. With summer planning complete, new initiatives rolled out, and post-convention energy radiating, the industry is ready to tackle the challenges of a new year. Often, however, the optimistic spirit that marks August subsides to a dull roar as the year progresses. Shrinking resources, national headlines, routine "fire" maintenance, and seemingly never-ending weeks (and weekends) re-emerge as the norm and threaten to degrade the "can do" attitude to one of mere survival. By the time May arrives, many are often left with disheveled offices, low morale, and a creeping thought of "Was I even successful this year?"

It is suggested 50 – 60 percent of student affairs professionals leave the field within five years (Marshall, Gardner, Hughes, & Lowery, 2016). Commonly examined on discussion boards, in conference presentations, and through scholarly research, high turnover and attrition within the industry is regularly felt on campuses and in organizations. Three decades of research suggests poor post-graduate school transitions, declining morale, work environment issues, and overall job dissatisfaction are root causes for such early exits (Marshall, Gardner, Hughes, & Lowery, 2016). The same research indicates new and mid-level professionals are most likely to leave, resulting in constant turnover at entry and middle manager positions. This attrition often prompts poor utilization of resources, a lack of experienced mid-managers, and a constantly revolving door that makes achievement of department, institutional, and organizational goals nearly impossible. Although this figure applies to student affairs broadly, it can be assumed fraternity and sorority affairs is not immune to this trend.

Although such high turnover at new and mid-level positions could paint a bleak picture for long-term advancement of the industry, it also offers guidance for identifying potential solutions. An obvious – but sometimes overlooked – path to resolving this issue is examining the concept of "success" and how it is achieved in the field. Examining this age-old, but highly relevant, question can help identify ways to retain and strengthen new and mid-level professionals, while simultaneously improving the fraternity and sorority industry, as a whole.

DEFINING SUCCESS

There are many avenues for the fraternity/sorority industry to achieve success. Professionals in all areas of fraternity and sorority life strive to eliminate harmful behavior, collaborate across governing bodies, support and advocate for important issues, give back to local communities, build membership, and construct opportunities for personal growth within collegiate members. At the root of this, is a collective goal to advance the industry by solidifying lifelong commitment through meaningful, high impact membership experiences. As such, fraternity/sorority advisors are called to navigate and advance their careers with collective industry goals in mind. When fraternity/sorority advisors lose sight of that mutually beneficial connection, however, achieving industry success becomes far more difficult.

Over the past 20 to 30 years, the definition of "career success" has drastically changed. Until the late 1980s, the traditional career was publicly defined, focused on steady upward movement in terms of income and status, and dependent on organizational loyalty (Chudzikowski, 2012). Since then, a new career context has emerged, focused on flatter hierarchies, increasingly project-based work, and frequent transitions. Here, the "boundaryless" career – centered on personal meaning and opportunities that transcend a single employer – reigns as the roadmap to success (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). This shift from the organization to the self is further demonstrated by the concepts of "objective" and "subjective" career success (Ng & Feldman, 2014). Objective career success (commonly associated with the "old" career context) typically reflects publicly observable factors such as occupation, income, and job level that showcase one's place in society. On the other hand, subjective career success looks at individuals' perceptions and feelings about their careers, emphasizing factors such as progression through various jobs, access to learning, and realization of life meaning (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). In a sense, objective career success is about an organization and one's ties to it; subjective career success is about one's greater sense of purpose and how to realize it.

These theories and concepts construct a framework that can serve as a solution for reducing turnover and attrition within the fraternity/sorority industry. To demonstrate this, the competing concepts of "objective" and "subjective" career success – and their impact on organizational and institutional frameworks – can be applied to a couple common workplace scenarios.

> "In an industry built on organizational loyalty, the fraternity/sorority advisor must reconcile one's personal goals with industry goals and seek to innovatively find ways to align the two."

"Eager Evan" is thrilled to begin his first job working in Fraternity and Sorority Affairs as a #SApro. His graduate school experience was filled with the optimal amount of challenge and support and he feels thoroughly prepared to take on all the "other duties as assigned" his new role throws at him. He's looking forward to networking at conferences, mentoring every student he meets, and ultimately, achieving his lifetime goal to change the world.

Within a couple of months on the job, Evan faces a few challenges he is not prepared for. He wasn't oriented to his role very well and his supervisor is seemingly non-existent. Evan's having difficulty finding mentors and tends to work incredibly long hours (and most weekends) because he is the youngest staff member and others assume he has plenty of time. Disgruntled parents frequently yell at him for things he cannot control, and his connection with students isn't as strong as he envisioned. As someone who was often praised as a student for his "incredible student affairs potential," Evan feels like a failure for not meeting expectations. Evan begins to seriously question whether or not working in fraternity and sorority life is best for him. By the end of the year, Evan is already job searching in hopes of finding another role that will provide more support and better opportunities for personal success.

After many years of long hours and hard work, "Soul Searching Shea" doesn't understand how she hasn't advanced further in her career. Although she has supervisory responsibilities, her hands are often tied by organizational hierarchy, which she believes stifles autonomy and professional growth. She always gives 110 percent, but rarely receives recognition for her contributions. Her role is ambiguous and she is so over "other duties as assigned." Even though Shea enjoys her work, she is frustrated with how little progress she has made since starting in the field and worries she cannot continue to give without receiving an equal amount in return.

Although Shea initially felt successful in the way she supported the industry in her work, she now feels trapped due to the limited opportunities and seemingly countless barriers she faces for career advancement and personal success. Due to Shea's soul searching, she isn't able to provide a very good supervisory experience to her employee, Evan. Over time, she becomes disengaged, bitter, and loses passion for the field. After what seems like decades of job searching and countless HR-automated rejection emails, Shea finally moves on to a new job, leaving a vast knowledge and experience gap to be filled at her previous institution.

Both of these scenarios present professionals that decide to leave because they do not feel successful or capable of achieving success within their roles and particular circumstances. Similarly, both scenarios depict professionals that are able to make the decision to initiate a career transition because they do not feel a strong connection to their institution, nor to the fraternity/sorority industry. In the end, the individual, institution, and industry all suffer as the result of this lack of perceived success and its consequences.

MOVING BEYOND
DUALITY TO INTERDEPENDENCE

To move the industry forward, the subjective and objective career success mindsets must be balanced and interconnected. The following four areas should be considered to begin to create interdependence as it relates not only to individual career success, but also to long-term success of the entire fraternity/sorority industry.

• Improved Supervision

Just as developmental theories guide work with students, it is critical supervisors recognize the stages of development and subsequent needs of their own employees. By utilizing adult development theory and recognizing out-of-work experiences impact employees' development and in-work performance, supervisors can help new and mid-level professionals better navigate their roles (Marsh, 2001). Greater emphasis must be placed on preparation for management. Far too often individuals are given supervisory responsibilities with little to no preparation or experience in management or organizational behavior. Consequently, many supervisors fail to model effective work behaviors and leadership, often leading to mistrust by supervisees (Marshall, Gardner, Hughes, & Lowery, 2016). When mistrust exists, effective relationships cannot exist and many supervisors are further unable to provide adequate support and guidance to help employees succeed. Whether it be guiding new professionals as they learn the difference between work and graduate school, focusing on initial and progressive goal setting while providing honest and transparent feedback, or helping a mid-level manager redefine success as something other than upward mobility, effective supervision is essential for constructing a productive work environment where all employees believe they have the capacity to thrive.

• Utilize Guiding Documents & Theories

Resources such as the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA) core competencies, Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), and established best practices provide a foundation for a successful fraternity/sorority industry. Even if objective career success (i.e. higher income levels, public recognition, etc.) may not be possible at the onset of – or even halfway through – one's career, subjective career success can be achieved by striving to meet such standards and simply doing good work. When one succeeds by implementing these tools, the entire industry succeeds.

• Better Graduate Preparation & More Realistic Expectations

Although the overly eager graduate student is a stereotype in fraternity/sorority affairs and the larger student affairs profession, there is truth to the "here to change the world" mindset many new professionals maintain upon entering the field. Unfortunately, such a mindset often leads to feelings of dejection, inadequacy, and self-doubt when expectations don't meet reality. To better prepare individuals for success, graduate assistantship programs must provide realistic expectations of the work fraternity and sorority affairs calls for, as well as introduce the concepts of "objective" and "subjective" career success and how they intersect. Only once new professionals understand fraternity/sorority advising is just as much of a job as it is a passion, and that subjective and objective career successes are not mutually exclusive, will turnover rates begin to drop.

• Revisiting Purpose

Working in student affairs, and any of its functional areas, requires a certain degree of altruism. Late nights, emotionally charged meetings, and constantly responding to questions regarding the relevance of fraternal organizations on the modern college campus can be draining. A sole focus on subjective career success can lead one to not only lose sight of organizational and institutional missions, but also to blur the line between professional goals and personal agendas, inhibiting industry advancement. Due to this, fraternity/sorority advisors cannot afford to operate solely within a subjective mindset that ignores organizational identity and loyalty. If they do, they – and the entire industry – will at the very best, remain stagnant, and at the very worst, collapse. In an industry built on organizational loyalty, the fraternity/sorority advisor must reconcile one's personal goals with industry goals and seek to innovatively find ways to align the two.

LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

Every year, fraternity/sorority advisors leave the industry due to poor graduate school transitions, attractive career alternatives, organizational mismanagement, work-life conflicts, and a loss of passion. Underlying these factors is a perceived lack of ability to succeed – however that may be defined – within one's current role, organization or institution, or more broadly, the industry.

Many instances exist when toxic work environments, poor management, and ceilings to upward mobility understandably drive strong professionals away from the field. At the same time, there are also many cases when desire for self-fulfillment, and pursuit of individual agendas, causes professionals to navigate their work in a way that sacrifice collective mission for personal gain. Although starkly different in nature, both circumstances ultimately result in high turnover and attrition, sparking a perpetual cycle that inhibits success for everyone involved.

In a field where silver linings and small wins are more frequent than major victories, it's paramount the fraternity/sorority industry solidifies objective commitment to the field by helping new and mid-level professionals find subjective career success, no matter the circumstances. Improved supervision, revitalization of purpose, emphasis on realistic expectations, and opportunities to creatively build and apply skills are essential for strengthening and supporting individuals within the larger industry context. Only once such interdependence exists will the door stop revolving long enough for the industry to lay a foundation for its own future success.

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CONGRATULATIONS

AWARD WINNERS

2017

Jack L. Anson Award

KAYE SCHENDEL

Dr. Kent L. Gardner Award

MELISSA VITO EdD

Robert H. Shaffer Award

MINDY SOPHER

Sue Kraft Fussell Distinguished Service Awards

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THAD DOYLE

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JASON R. KILMER PhD

VERONICA MOORE

afa

NETFLIX *and learn*

It is challenging to find someone without a Netflix account, or who at least share an account with a friend, partner, roommate, etc. Students and professionals alike enjoy a solid bout of procrastination every now and then. Together they often turn toward Netflix to provide an outlet for both entertainment and learning. Professionals often look to the documentaries section for educational programming inspiration or to enhance curriculum or community engagement. Recently, Netflix has been creating original content and streaming existing shows, movies, and documentaries that can be used as starting points of larger conversations within communities. This content is helpful in the accessibility of using Netflix as a tool to decentralize learning. Additionally, using trends in the media with students helps to illustrate lessons. While there are pros and cons that come with utilizing such trends in education, "Perspectives" saw this as an opportunity to enlist content experts from within and from outside of the field of higher education, fraternity/sorority professionals, and students to weigh in what is good, what is bad, and what may be problematic about each of the selections provided.

This guide is meant to help shape conversations and learning experiences around each piece, rather than a deterrent or promotional spot. So sit back, grab some popcorn, some critical theory, silence your cell phone, and "Netflix and Learn"!

BRITTANY BARNES / GABRIELLE RIMMAUDO

half the sky

GINNY CARROLL

The Circle of Sisterhood Foundation (CofS) was established in 2010 to leverage the influence of sorority women across North America to uplift girls and women from poverty and oppression through education. As the largest body of college educated women in the world, sorority women have a responsibility to break down barriers to education for girls and women. Founded and powered by sorority women, CofS currently has 245 campus sorority communities and thousands of alumnae helping us provide opportunity through education in 22 countries.

The catalyst for this movement was the book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. The book is a call to arms against this era's most pervasive human rights violation: the oppression of women and girls in the developing world. Authors and Pulitzer Prize winners Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn take the reader on a journey through Africa and Asia to meet the extraordinary women struggling there. The authors depict our world with anger, sadness, clarity, and, ultimately, hope. They show how a little help can transform the lives of women and girls abroad. The stories include; a Cambodian teenager sold into sex slavery who eventually escaped from her brothel and, with assistance from an aid group, built a thriving retail business that supports her family; and an Ethiopian woman who suffered devastating injuries in childbirth, but had her injuries repaired and in time became a surgeon. Through numerous stories like these, the authors help us see that the key to economic progress lies in unleashing women's potential. Countries such as China have prospered precisely because they emancipated women and brought them into the formal economy. Unleashing that process globally is not only the right thing to do; it is also the best strategy for fighting poverty. Throughout much of the world, the greatest unexploited economic resource is the female half of the population.

The book was followed by the *Half the Sky* documentary which is a four-hour television series shot in 10 countries. Traveling with intrepid reporter and book author Nicholas Kristof and A-list celebrity advocates, the series introduces women and girls who are living under some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable — and fighting bravely to change them. Their intimate stories of struggle reflect viable and sustainable options for empowerment and offer an actionable blueprint for transformation. The documentary film has helped thousands of sorority women better understand the global issues affecting women and how providing access to education will help diminish many of the oppressive issues women face. Deeply inspirational, *Half the Sky* is essential reading for everyone.

"As the largest body of college educated women in the world, sorority women have a responsibility to break down barriers to education for girls and women."

Sorority women are standing together, across affiliation, on campuses across the country to learn about the issues through books/documentaries like *Half the Sky*. The awareness about the issues these students are then creating in their communities has had a significant positive effect - privilege is better understood, relationships among groups are stronger, and campus administrators are acknowledging this student engagement in global issues.

13 REASONS WHY

ROSS SZABO

Netflix's hit *13 Reasons Why* is stirring a national conversation about mental health and sexual assault. An adaptation of a young adult novel by Jay Asher, the series follows the aftermath of a high school student's suicide. Before taking her own life, Hannah creates 13 cassette tapes, each one dedicated to a person who somehow played a part in her death by suicide, causing guilt and paranoia between members of the selected group. The show also involves sexual assault, bullying, and gender dynamics.

Some themes in the series:

- Students relate to the exclusion, loneliness, anger, excitement and pain experienced by characters in the episodes.
- The main character dies by suicide.
- Rape and sexual assault occur in the series and the incidents are not handled well by adults in the show.
- Bullying and cyberbullying occur in the series in a way that many students have experienced.
- The "typical" adolescent development milestones of identity, peer relationships and autonomy from parents underlie the angst of the series.

Oftentimes, when a series like this comes out, students relate to the content and adults do not want them to relate to it, so efforts are made to try to shut it down. It is important to understand that if your students like this show it is better to ask them why they like it and engage in important conversations about mental health, sexual assault, and bullying. You should watch this series and think about how to have conversations with students or develop lessons from the show.

You could use the series to benefit students in the following ways:

- Develop questions to ask students about consent and sexual assault.
- Use the show as a case study about what the main character and her friends could do differently.
- Ask students what they relate to in the show and how they could live their lives differently from the characters in the show.
- Discuss the importance of bystander/upstander intervention.
- Encourage students to create a mental health awareness week that involves them sharing their own stories with mental health and informs all students about the mental health resources on campus.
- Talk about suicide directly with students to find out how they feel about the issue. Provide warning signs of suicidal ideation and the steps individuals and friends can take to get help.

Problems with *13 Reasons Why*:

The adults in the show were apathetic at best and not concerned about what happened to the young people. You can change this by showing how much you care and want to help students. The rape and sexual assault scenes can trigger some people, so it is important to reinforce how these issues should be handled on your campus. The show goes against the guidelines of mental health experts by showing a specific way someone can take her own life. Talk about depression and suicide to let students know there are options for them to seek help.

Embrace

KATE MOORE

Every single day college students express themselves and their views on body image: through what they post on social media, what they are wearing to class and public events, and the general language that is used surrounding bodies. Body image can be a serious issue and sometimes it is really hard to know where to start. Taryn Brumfitt's *Embrace* documentary on Netflix is a great way to begin a conversation about this topic with college age youth. Taryn comes at the conversation from a place of motherhood and how her view of her own body shifted after giving birth, and then realizing that she hated her body.

Along with a number of resources that pair well with the documentary, the website for the Body Image Movement shares a mission that is grounded in the belief that your body is not an ornament. BIM believes that everyone has the right to love and embrace their body, regardless of shape, size, ethnicity or ability (*bodyimagemovement.com*).

This documentary helps to remind students that they are so much more than their bodies and the way they look is not at all important or indicative to who they are inside. Body image is an issue which is important for both men and women to discuss and address. Often, body image issues are seen as only affecting women and girls, however, the documentary also includes the effect negative body image has on men and boys. This is important for men, especially teenagers and young adults, because they often do not understand the way their language is affecting their peers. The first time this film was shared with a 21 year old man, he teared up afterwards and said, "I hate that I've been part of this problem. I would never want to make anyone feel that way."

It is important to be open with our students about body image. Social media is a huge vehicle for body shaming, and students are paying more attention to how many likes they are getting on an Instagram post instead of how happy and fulfilled they are feeling on a day-to-day basis. Studies show that the more time individuals spend in front of a screen, the more unhappy they are. This documentary provides an opportunity to discuss how the way a person feels about their body, and what other people think about it, can negatively impact lives and what to do with those feelings and experience.

" BIM believes that everyone has the right to love and embrace their body, regardless of shape, size, ethnicity or ability. "

TO THE BONE

BRITTANY BARNES

The Netflix original film *To the Bone* highlights a group of young adults receiving treatment for a variety of disordered eating behaviors. Produced in the 1980's and 1990's, most films about eating disorders focused on anorexia and/or bulimia in young white women. In this way, *To the Bone* is not terribly different, following 20-year- old Ellen through her journey in a group recovery facility, but the film brings the topic to the forefront of conversation for young people in a fresh way.

The desire of the creators was to provide an opportunity to increase dialogue around eating disorders, much in the same way the Netflix series Thirteen Reasons Why increased dialogue around the issue of teen suicide (Fuller, 2017). The film boasts a 10 second disclaimer at the beginning, as it doesn't shy away from showing the reality of the characters experiences with anorexia, bulimia, food restriction, laxative use, and binge eating. Fuller (2017) notes that this stark depiction of eating disorders risks further glamorization of an 'ideal body type' and eating disorders as a means to that end. Additionally, mental health professionals are concerned that the vivid imagery will be triggering to people affected directly or indirectly by eating disorders (Fuller, 2017).

To the Bone showcases the range of ways these behaviors present in a person's life. It examines individual's experiences with power, control, emotion, and environmental circumstance, encouraging audiences to see the complex factors at play in recovery and treatment. The film also offers a more diverse perspective than other films on the topic; one of the main characters, Luke, is a young man and the residents of the facility vary in age and racial/ethnic demographics.

However, issues of tokenization creep in when the only person of color in the facility has little character development and the lead is the only male. Studies indicate that 10 million men and 20 million women will encounter a clinically significant eating disorder in their lifetime, while Weltzin, Carlson, et al. (2014) suggests that subclinical eating disorders are nearly as common among males as females (Wade, Keski-Rahkonen, & Hudson, 2011). Additionally, Marques, et al. (2011) and Sala, et al. (2014) suggest that eating disorders are at least as common among different racial/ethnic groups are they are for white populations, leaving one to wonder if more could have been done to develop this theme in the film.

Overall, *To the Bone* offers a fresh take on eating disorders that are palatable for today's collegians. Cinematography makes it feel edgy and on trend. The plot invites nuanced conversations around privilege, diversity, and gender in its approach to subject matter. However, it is probably best to consult with mental health professionals when thinking about hosting a screening.

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To continue these discussions here are some additional resources for difficult conversations with students.

DEAR WHITE PEOPLE

Students of color navigate the daily sights and slippery politics of life at an Ivy League college that's not nearly as "post-racial" as it thinks.

MASK YOU LIVE IN

This documentary on the American "boy crisis" explains how to raise a healthier generation of men and features interviews with experts and academics.

AUTHORS

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Ginny Carroll is passionate about building capacity, education and being a sorority woman. She founded the Circle of Sisterhood Foundation that works to empowering girls worldwide by breaking down barriers to education.

Ginny strongly believes that educating and empowering girls will shape current and future global, economic, and social prosperity. And she has seen first-hand the power of the sorority community to make the world a better place for girls.

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Ross Szabo is a social innovator who pioneered the youth mental health movement. He is the Wellness Director at Geffen Academy at UCLA. Ross is also an award winning speaker, author and the CEO of Human Power Project, a company that designs mental health curriculum.

Ross turned a diagnosis of bipolar disorder with anger control problems and psychotic features at age 16, into an opportunity to educate others. His natural ability to make mental health approachable for large groups of people has led to countless media appearances.

Kate Moore
getFIT615

Kate Moore is a Body Image Movement Global Ambassador and owner of getFIT615, a group fitness gym in Nashville, TN. Kate believes that our bodies are made for movement and empowers her students to love and care for them in a way that feels completely authentic.

Kate also co-leads weekend retreats called Heartfelt where participants watch the Embrace Film, and talk about self-love and connecting with our most authentic selves.

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Brittany serves as an Assistant Director of Fraternity, Sorority, and Cooperative Life at Purdue University. She holds a bachelor's Degree from Kent State University in Theatre and a master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of Iowa. She also serves as a Project Leader for RISE Partnerships, a consulting and training organization focused on assisting organizations and institutions better meet the needs of students and stakeholders. Brittany loves Diet Coke, talking about complex issues, and learning from others.

NETFLIX ORIGINAL
BURNING
SANDS
GREGORY S. PARKS PH.D

On the afternoon of March 10, 2017, I kicked-back on my couch and watched Burning Sands. The Netflix film told the story of five Lambda Lambda Phi Fraternity pledges at the historically black Frederick Douglas University. According to the movie's director Gerard McMurray, the 2011 hazing death of Florida A&M University drum major Robert Champion inspired the film. I imagine McMurray's own experiences, joining Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, laid some of the foundation for the movie, as well. I, having read many of Black Greek-letter organization ("BGLO") hazing incidents from the past several decades—in the news, in court opinions and case files—experienced Burning Sands as authentic in many ways. In fact, the film brought back memories of my own experiences with hazing.

Among BGLO members, Burning Sands was controversial. The common critiques were it "aired dirty laundry," and it wasn't an authentic portrayal—that it sensationalized BGLO hazing. From my vantage point, the film grappled with the complex factors that undergird BGLO hazing. The two key factors the film explored were (1) bad collegiate fraternity members and (2) bad alumni fraternity members. However, Burning Sands didn't explore the broader contextual factors that provide fertile ground for hazing. As a practical matter, it couldn't. To do so would have made for a substantially protracted film that would have been far less interesting.

Hazing isn't a simple matter of one's assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, cognitions, and prejudices. Rather, hazing emerges from a broader context of factors—individual, interpersonal, organizational, cultural, and societal (Watling & Neal, 2013). Within each of these domains, there are likely dozens of theories and broad bodies of research that explain hazing. These domains cannot, in isolation, elucidate why hazing exists and persists. Instead, they operate in a complex pattern of overlap and interaction (Page, 2011). From my research, there is no fast or obvious way to address hazing. Indeed, if one wishes to maximize their efforts in understanding and addressing BGLO hazing, organizational dynamics is the starting place. More specifically, understanding the nature, authority, and influence of leadership provides the start of the crucial roadmap toward hazing insight, prevention, and solutions.

Within BGLOs, the national heads of the respective groups are like benevolent dictators. In many respects, they exercise disproportionate political authority within their own organization. There's some democratic decision making in BGLOs, such as through elected representatives. Quite often, however, these representatives, and even rank-and-file members, cede considerable power to the national head (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). This is important in the context of hazing because ultimately, the national head decides whether hazing will be addressed during their term of office. If it is, the national head also has near complete authority to determine how those efforts will be circumscribed. Who will serve on the taskforce? Will there be money allocated and, if so, how much? Which ideas will gain ascendency and implementation?

These organizations' efforts to address hazing would be more fruitful if any had transformational leaders—those who work with staff and volunteers to identify needed change and then bring about said change through inspiration and completion. However, research suggests leaders cannot be transformational unless they understand the complexities of the challenges (Martin & Ernst, 2005; Sun & Anderson 2012). There are two things that undermine BGLOs' national heads' ability to understand the intricacies of hazing. First, BGLOs are greedy institutions; they consume a lot of active members' time (Coser, 1974). Specifically, those in leadership volunteer dozens of hours per week vis-a-vis their organization—attending meetings, responding to phone calls, checking emails, and completing paperwork. As such, the leaders likely have little time to figure out the root causes of hazing or its most plausible solutions.

Second, to become a BGLO national head, one must typically rise through the leadership structure of their organization. The problem here is two-fold. One is that the work of the national head maybe fundamentally different from other leaders of lesser authority. Members rise through the leadership ranks of their organization, and those offices never prepare them to be the national head, in its ideal form. As research on the Peter Principle suggests, "managers rise to the level of their incompetence" (Peter & Hull, 1969). The problem is that a BGLO member can rise from chapter president to area head to state head to regional head. During this process, their decision making with regard to hazing and risk management policy is likely to be fairly inconsequential. However, this ascension puts them in a position to be elected national head and to largely decide the hazing and risk management policy for their organization. If elected, they often have authority without insight.

Their decision-making becomes critical to the viability of the organization and even to the well-being of individuals seeking membership in their organization. In addition, organizations that choose their top leader from a highly filtered pool—where leaders successively hold advancing leadership positions within the organization—often end up with a status quo leader. That's because highly filtered leaders have spent considerable time adapting to the ways of the organization and not innovating. They grow and evolve inside the box, and thus, find it difficult to think outside of it (Mukunda, 2012). As such, the very system that BGLOs tend to use to select their most powerful leaders ensures not only limited insight, but also limited innovation around addressing hazing.

A reasonable rebuttal to these points is that the national head need not know everything, or even anything, about hazing to adequately address it. Instead, in order to transform their organization, the national head simply needs to get the right people on the proverbial bus (Collins, 2001). This is simpler than it sounds, because there many reasons why national heads never get the best advice on how to address hazing. As a general matter, decision-making theory research suggests people more readily take the advice of individuals who are part of their in-group. In the context of BGLO hazing, this means national heads are likely to ignore ideas from non-blacks, non-BGLO members, non-members of their fraternity or sorority, and individuals outside their inner-circle. Even more, national heads are likely to ignore ideas from individuals who tell them things about hazing they don't want to hear. Back to the earlier point about BGLO national heads being benevolent dictators, such leaders, wishing not to have their authority challenged, choose their associates with the prime criteria of loyalty and incompetence---at least not enough competence to challenge the leader's authority (Egorov & Sonin, 2011). If this theory were to hold up within BGLOs, even where an organization has a committee or taskforce to address hazing, the member of the organization with the greatest competence in hazing wouldn't be that unit's chair. Essentially, the national head would choose someone with enough competence to seem plausible as the chair, but not so much that they would challenge the national head or push them beyond the status quo. In short, even where the national head acknowledges that they lack the knowledge or experience needed to address hazing, they still aren't likely to get the right people together. Furthermore, this type of decision making may not even be conscious or intentional. Instead, gut instincts and inherent or learned biases may guide the national head's decision making.

Lastly, the national head's ideological bent is likely to be highly predictive of how they address hazing. For decades, social scientists have studied the distinctions between conservatives and liberals. Table 1 highlights some of these fundamental distinctions. While this research has largely focused on implications for partisan politics and public policy, it provides food for thought with regard to organizations, including BGLOs.

Table 1: Distinctions between Conservatives and Liberals

LIBERALS	CONSERVATIVES
Open to Experiences	Closed to Experiences
More Educated	Less Educated
Complex Analysis	Simple Analysis
Value Science	Skeptical of Science
Inclusive	Discriminating
Constructive Allegiance	Blind Allegiance
Change-oriented	Status Quo-oriented
Risk-taking	Risk Averse
Future-oriented	Past-oriented
Challenge Authority	Obedience to Authority
National Intervention	Localism
External Engagement	Isolationism

The national heads, in the context of addressing hazing, tend to be closed to new experiences and, thus, less innovative (Osborne & Sibley, 2015). They tend to know little about why hazing exists and persists and what to do about it. Their assessment of hazing can be distilled to simple rationale, often missing nuance and complexity (Tetlock, 1983). The national heads too often fail to look for data-driven and best practice-driven insights and solutions to address hazing (Nisbet, Cooper, & Garrett, 2015). Particularly within the fraternities, there is an inability and unwillingness to grapple with the notions of masculinity and homophobia within their ranks.

Accordingly, the national heads are unable to consider some of the most fundamental cultural factors that sustain and propel hazing. Their resistance to consistent and critical feedback about their organizations breeds a culture of blind conformity among members (Toorn, Nail, Liviatan, & Jost, 2014; Nail, Mcgregor, Drinkwater, Steele, & Thompson, 2009). Consequently, a culture in which organizational blind spots can be identified is suppressed. The national heads tend to shy away from bold moves that would dramatically shift their organizations from their current approaches to risk management (Choma, Hanoch, Hodson, & Gummerum, 2014). Too often they are wedded to how they have traditionally addressed hazing, failing to be forward-looking toward the best approaches. Their belief in obedience to authority, undermines dissent among their respective organizations' rank-and-file, and therefore, the types of innovative ideas that could bubble up to the top rarely happen (Frimer, Gaucher, & Schaefer, 2014). The national heads' belief that problem solving should be local limits the role the national organization could and should play in providing the necessary material, as well as human and intellectual capital, to address hazing (Barber, 2013). Lastly, national heads' may believe there is little they can learn about hazing and risk management from other BGLOs, the broader fraternity/sorority community, or even other types of organizations altogether (Golec de Zavala & Van Bergh, 2007; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Such attitudes not only leave individual BGLOs isolated; they also leave them deeply uninformed and inefficient in addressing hazing within their own ranks.

The point here is not that BGLO national heads are dumb, don't love their organizations, or haven't rendered useful leadership in their fraternity or sorority. Rather, the point is that they are human and suffer from the same set of gaps in knowledge and cognitive biases as most other humans. In fact, the national heads rise through an organizational system that rewards such gaps in knowledge and cognitive biases with each new leadership post. BGLO members don't elect for competence (e.g., ideas about effective and efficient solutions to hazing), especially when they don't know what it should look like. They, like most voters, elect their leaders based on emotional appeals and knowledge of who has previously held leadership positions in their respective organizations (Westen, 2008). The problem is that BGLO national heads then become imbued with the authority to make the most important decisions about the safety, health, and well-being of their members. And power, coupled with the inability to make informed, rational, and visionary decisions, becomes a deadly mixture sooner or later. This is the backstory of Burning Sands, but one not made for television.

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sticks and stones

THE POWER OF LANGUAGE IN BUILDING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

DR. KHRYSTAL L. SMITH

Many are taught about the power of words from an early age. A toddler needing assistance is told to "use their words" to specify a need; adolescents quickly learn that words can hurt just as much as "sticks and stones." Within higher education, there has been a move toward the use of more inclusive language, such as the correct use of one's preferred pronouns to influence perceptions of a welcoming environment. The power of language also shapes the work of the fraternity/sorority professional. This can be demonstrated through the lens of an NPHC-affiliated member whose organizational protocol discourages the use of terms like pledge, made, and probate. It is also demonstrated in the broader context of the work of educators and mentors who challenge students to elevate their own language when describing their fraternal/sororal experiences. Language is a double-edged sword; it is a powerful tool that has the ability to unite or divide, empower or oppress, reinforce privilege or highlight the lack thereof.

Unfortunately, a lack of awareness around the power of language does not only occur among students, parents, faculty, and staff; it still exists within student affairs, including those who work directly with fraternities and sororities. An example of this can be found in department-produced promotional materials that use broad terms like sorority recruitment to advertise a formal recruitment process specific to one council when multiple councils exist on that campus. Additionally, the use of privileged language like traditional, mainstream, or regular is still used by professionals to differentiate between chapters associated with a campus' College Panhellenic or Inter-Fraternity Council, and chapters associated with a campus' National Pan-Hellenic Council, Multicultural Greek Council, or Independent Greek Council. This language is divisive and negates the traditions and histories organizations that are not members of the College Panhellenic or Inter-Fraternity Council, undermining the work they do on their campuses and in their local communities.

Similarly, graduate students and professionals are commonly taught to avoid referring to college students as kids, however they often fail to apply the same logic when referring to sorority women as girls or fraternity men as boys. This problem is exacerbated when fraternity members are referred to as men while sorority members are referred to as girls. Such language reinforces privileged language around gender. Please note, language choice does not only have negative influence on students, but also on how professional colleagues treat one another. Professionals, associations, and inter/national organizations must also avoid "othering" the very people committed to advancing the fraternal and sororal movement. For example this author attended an affiliation lunch at a regional conference for campus Inter-Fraternity Council chapters and had to sit a table labeled "Panhellenic and Other Friends." This was the catch-all term used by the event coordinators to describe advisors who were not members of the IFC affiliated organizations present. This language potentially marginalized some individuals in attendance, whereas a table name such as "Friends of the IFC" could have been more inclusive of all in attendance.

It is important to acknowledge, the use of this type of language frequently occurs unintentionally. However, professionals have to take responsibility for the coded messages sent by the language they view as jargon common to our field. They will be more successful in their work if they are better attuned to the messages they communicate, and they are more intentional in their use of language.

Some examples of how fraternity/sorority life professionals can be more intentional about using inclusive language can be found below:

- Understand that a fraternity is a fraternity, and a sorority is a sorority, regardless of its council of affiliation. To the member, the sense of community and belonging is universal whether they are a member of an Interfraternity Council organization, a faith-based fraternal organization, or any other iteration of a fraternity or sorority.
- When needing to differentiate among councils, refer to the individual council by name (i.e. "Our College Panhellenic includes the following organizations"), or choose language that describes the differences as defined by those organizations (i.e. culturally-based, professional, honorary, etc.).
- Learn the terminology used by culturally-based fraternities and sororities. A stroll is different from a step, which is also different from a salute. Be intentional about referring to these traditions by their correct names as a means of showing respect to the cultures that produced them.
- When promoting recruitment activities, use clarifying language that identifies the involved organizations/council (i.e. College Panhellenic Recruitment), instead of generic language (i.e. Sorority Recruitment). It may take a few extra characters to type, but it is important to use accurate language that doesn't marginalize the sororities on campus that do not participate in College Panhellenic Recruitment, and have their own recruitment or intake processes. Avoid referring to some chapters as fraternities/sororities and others as organizations; use the same language for all chapters. Failure to do so creates a hierarchy of organizational value, and "others" the excluded groups.
- Correct individuals when they exclude active chapters from their count when describing how many organizations are on a campus. A community is made up of all active chapters, not just the ones an organization interacts with most frequently.
- Correct individuals when they refer to members as sorority girls or fraternity boys or fail to use correct language when describing their community, in general.
- Work with chapter advisors and/or headquarters staff and volunteers to identify correct language when referencing things specific to the organization so that it can be reinforced at the campus level. Often, chapters utilize nicknames that violate their headquarters' protocols, so communication with organizational partners is key.

If those who work with fraternities and sororities are to advance as a profession, they must elevate their language in the same manner that they elevate their professional practices. The following questions are important to consider as one seeks to create a more inclusive fraternity and sorority experience.

- **What coded or privileged language appears in your publications?**
- **How do you describe your community to parents and potential members during orientation?**
- **When someone calls your office to inquire about an organization, how do front desk staff respond?**

Language that marginalizes or "others" members of the fraternity and sorority community has to be replaced with language that is inclusive and representative of all chapters that exist on a campus. In order for this to happen, it is incumbent upon fraternity/sorority professionals to first examine their own language in order to role model correct language for students, parents, and colleagues. They must use their words; their diverse communities and the fraternity and sorority profession deserve it.

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